L James Street North
programme
(Interim report)

JAMES STREET NORTH

PROGRAMME

Interim report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the programme report, the existing users and their needs have been examined. Potential users have also been considered in an attempt to understand the realistic growth opportunities for James Street North business community. After assembling this user data, we did a general synopsis of the existing facilities and amenities on the street. The Design Guidelines take into account all of the above data and describe a more detailed work plan for the James Street North Streetscape Project. The general design philosophy is described in the following goal and objectives.

GOAL:

To plan, design and develop an exciting streetscape for James Street North that capitalizes on the existing unique character of the area that will serve as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of the area and business community.

OBJECTIVES:

- to develop a stronger visual identity for James Street North based on the existing Italian/Portuguese cultural heritage;
- to evolve a pattern of major and minor node areas that will serve as foci, pedestrian attractions and/or landmarks;
- to use amenities and planting in a pattern complimentary to the system of nodes and pedestrian linkages;
- to develop an attractive fun and friendly pedestrian environment;
- to do a cursory analysis of traffic flow and parking;
- to create clearly identified pedestrian/parking linkages;

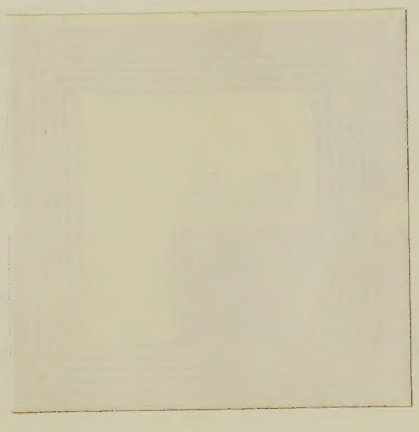
- to work co-operatively with Canadian National Realty and the City of Hamilton to create a major attraction on the now vacant C.N. property bordering James Street North to the east;
- to work co-operatively with the members of Christ Church Cathedral to enable a degree of public use of the area in front of the Cathedral;
- to use a flexible design approach to enable the individualism and independence of shopkeepers and business people to people to continue.

2. EXISTING USERS

The research information on existing users includes a description of the type, number and ethnicity of business operating in the study area. A percentage breakdown of commercial floor space is also provided. By examining the combined statistics*, a profile emerges of the nature and composition of the existing business community.

TYPE OF BUSINESS/SERVICE	NUMBER OF ESTABLISHMENTS
Food Stores	10
General Merchandise	6
Specialty Stores	21
Clothing and Shoe Stores	16
Hardware, Household, Furnishings	12
Restaurants & Taverns	13
Personal Service	19
Recreation	9
Professional Services	2
Financial Services	7
Misc. Commercial	2
Vacant	10

USE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA
General Merchandise Retail	37%
Hardware, Household Furniture and Appliances	10%
Restaurants and Taverns	10%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and General Business Offices/Services	9%
Specialty Stores	7%
Vacant Commercial	7%



USE	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COMMERCIAL FLOOR AREA
Clothing and Shoe Stores	5%
Recreation and Leisure	5%
Personal Service	4%
Food Stores	3%
Professional Service	2%
Miscellaneous Commercial	1%

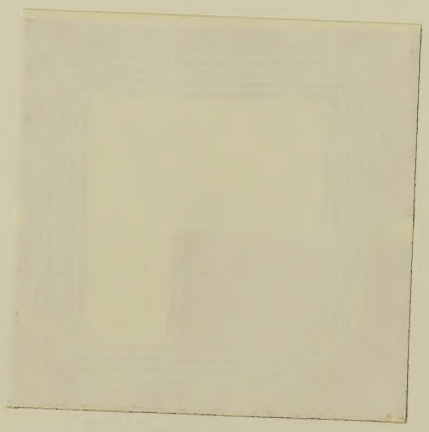
The ethnicity of the area is examined in two areas, one, Cannon to Barton, and, two, Barton to the C.N.R. Merchant ethnicity and business language are given as a percentage of the total number of merchants and customers.

CANNON TO BARTON

Ethnicity and Language	Merchant Ethnicity	Business Language
Canadian (English)	30.0%	46.0%
Portuguese	35.6%	27.8%
Italian	20.7%	21.1%
Other	13.2%	4.9%

BARTON TO C.N.R.

Ethnicity and Language	Merchant Ethnicity	Business Language
Canadian (English)	53.3%	26.7%
Portuguese	6.3%	0.0%
Italian	34.1%	10.0%
Canadian (English/Italian)	0.0%	60.0%
Other	6.3%	3.3%



Along with Canadian, Italian and Portuguese are strongly represented on James Street North. This cultural mix is reflected in the shops' merchandise, restaurants, food stores' selection and personal services offered. A unique characteristic of the existing study area, it is widely viewed as a strong attribute (see Existing Public Opinion Section).

Information is also available on the number and type of residential units. The total number of units available is 215, of these 72 are vacant. The remaining 143 are either tenant or owner occupied. Tenant occupancy accounts for 112 units and 31 are owner occupied. The owner occupied numbers are substantial for a downtown area and reflect the "family business" characteristics of the area.

Also present on the street are two other property owners whose activities affect the character of James Street North. Christ Church Cathedral has occupied its site at 252 James Street North for over 150 years. The Cathedral, the hall and the grounds provide a unique architectural element, a strong historic component and a semi-public space on James Street North. Seat of the Anglican diocese, the Cathedral is not a neighbourhood church in that many members live in various Hamilton/Toronto region locations.

The Armouries occupy almost the entire Cannon/Robert block. A strong dominant architectural feature, the Armouries is no longer active in community functions. It is considered a closed facility and an indifferent non-contribution to the vitality of James Street.

* Source: James Street North Heritage District
Background Information Report
Hamilton-Wentworth Planning and Development Dept.
September 1984

James Street North Heritage District
Background Information Extension Report
Hamilton-Wentworth Planning and Development Dept.
September 1984

3. USER OPINION

On October 30, 1986, Letters of Invitation to a Public Meeting and Questionnaires were delivered to the Jamesville B.I.A. office for hand distribution to the merchants in the study area. At the same time, Invitations and Questionnaires were mailed to others concerned with the Street, including Christ Church Cathedral, the Armouries, and district offices of stores located on the street. They are included in the appendix. Seven questionnaires were picked up by Rick Lintack, S.M. Roscoe Inc., on a door to door canvass on Friday, November 7th, three returned by mail, and seventeen collected at the Public Meeting.

The Public Meeting was attended by approximately 50 people and was very positive and constructive despite recent divisions in the business community.

Results of the Questionnaire are tabulated as follows:

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS:

1. The following ten items are important aspects of a Streetscape Project.

   The list below summarizes the order of importance of each:

PARKING	1
TRAFFIC FLOW	2
SECURITY	3
LIGHTING	4
SIGNAGE	5
OTHER: CLEANLINESS	6
STREET FURNITURE	7
OPEN PUBLIC GREEN SPACE	8
STREET TREES	9
HERITAGE BUILDINGS	10

2. Do you feel it is important to attract downtown users in your area? Yes x No. ____

3. Do you feel it is important to attract city wide users in your area? Yes x No. ____

4. Do you feel there is need for wider sidewalks? Yes 10 No. 14

5. The List below summarizes the most favoured and least favoured blocks in the James Street North area, in their relation to each other:

EAST SIDE	MOST FAVOURED	LEAST FAVOURED
Wilson - Cannon	+4	
Cannon - Robert (Armouries)		-6
Robert - Barton (Cathedral)	+13	
Barton - Murray	+1	
Murray - C.N.R. Tracks (C.N. Station)		-5

WEST SIDE	MOST FAVOURED	LEAST FAVOURED
Vine - Cannon	+1	
Cannon - Mulberry	+11	
Mulberry - Colborne	+9	
Colborne - Barton	+4	
Barton - Murray		-3
Murray - C.N.R. Tracks		-8

PUBLIC MEETING RESULTS:

The following is a unedited synopsis of the comments made at the public meeting:

- Christ Church Cathedral indicated that they have the possibility of providing senior citizen apartments on their property;
- the existing traffic pattern should be seriously studied to see how it can better serve the area;
- the construction period should be as short as possible to minimize disruption of existing business;
- the Armouries should be opened up to the neighbourhood for community activities as it was in the past;
- ideas of defining the district boundaries and developing focal points is a good one, the old Gore Park fountain
- should be relocated into a new park in front of the C.N.R. station;
- the streets and sidewalks are dirty, emphasis should be placed on keeping the area clean;
- the Mission has a negative impact on the area and should be relocated;
- provision of ample parking should be a top priority;
- the area has a lively ethnic character which should be developed;
- interlocking pavers should not be used; the possibility of using maple trees should be explored;
- the Church should be better lit at night;
- measures should be taken to soften the impact of the Armouries;
- tree planting that has occurred on other streetscape projects downtown often impinges on the sidewalk and on easy pedestrian movement, the use of the London Plane tree should be explored; idea of clustering the tree planting is a good one;

- existing trees on the street often block the signage of the stores;
- parking lots should be developed behind the existing buildings; this would allow sidewalks to be widened in certain places to accommodate street cafes;
- active recreation facilities are needed for children living in the area;
- parking in front of stores should remain;
- the traffic pattern should be studied, re-designed to discourage use of James Street North as a throughway;
- a two-way traffic system should be introduced;
- a two-way traffic system should not be introduced if it will cause the elimination of parking meters;
- a half-hour of free parking on the street should be introduced;
- James Street North should be thought of in terms of a commercial corridor with Eaton's/Jackson Square at one end and the proposed Waterfront development at the foot of James Street at the other;
- the Consultants should go "wild" with their imaginations and give James Street a totally unique character;
- the purpose of the Streetscape is to enhance profits, nothing should impinge on that;
- the Cathedral has been on the street for 150 years and will be there for another 150 years; it is very interested in being a good neighbour and opening up to the community;
- the possibility of introducing different banners should be explored;
- James Street North is a commercial street and, because of this, does change and evolve over time, the streetscape should be flexible to allow for this.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND PUBLIC MEETING ANALYSIS:

Because Question 1 of the Questionnaire asked for a ranking of preferences, multiplication factors were able to be applied (a multiplication factor of 10 applied to choice number 1, a multiplication factor of 9 applied to choice number 2, a multiplication factor of 8 applied to choice number 3, etc., etc.). The following summary is developed:

Parking	144
Traffic Flow	64
Security	63
Lighting	56
Signage	40
Cleanliness	36
Street Furniture	27
Open Public Green Space	25
Street Trees	24
Heritage Buildings	18

The item of most importance in the questionnaire is PARKING. Concern over this item was also raised in the public meeting. A study of available parking space is being conducted by our Traffic Engineer to determine the accuracy of this concern.

The item of least importance in the questionnaire was HERITAGE BUILDINGS. Judging by the types of unsolicited comments received on the questionnaire, it is our opinion that the exceptionally low ranking of this item in the questionnaire may simply be an overreaction to the current discussions of Heritage Designation of the district. At the Public Meeting, however, there was no discussion of the proposed Heritage Designation, and some spoke of the asset that certain historic buildings, particularly the Cathedral and the C.N.R. Station, were to the area.

The item ranked second in importance in the questionnaire and of great concern in the Public Meeting was TRAFFIC FLOW. The majority stated dissatisfaction with the existing traffic system, with many feeling that the street was simply a throughway that did nothing to help their businesses. Most favoured the introduction of a two-way traffic system but others feared the loss of meter parking as suggested by previous Traffic Department comments.

Other streetscape items were examined. Lighting ranked high while, interestingly, street trees were considered of low relative importance. The issue of traffic flow is not directly within the Terms of Reference of this project, however, we must report that it is still of utmost concern to the people of James Street North, and an item worthy of further discussion.

The idea that James Street North had many of the positive qualities of a "village" was apparent in the Public Meeting. Opinion in the questionnaire was unanimous, though, that the people of James Street North want to attract downtown users and city-wide users to their area. Opinion was slightly in favour of not widening the sidewalks.

The most favoured blocks on the Questionnaire were the East side of James from Robert to Barton (Cathedral), and west side from Cannon to Mulberry (Jerry Men's Shop, Anshels, the Vasco da Gamma Club). Considered less favoured were blocks towards the southern end of the area. Least favoured were the blocks from Murray to Barton on the west side of James and Murray Street to the C.N.R. tracks on both sides of James.

4. POTENTIAL USER PROFILE

All statistics for this section have been taken from the Downtown Action Plan, City of Hamilton, Retail Potential Analysis (updated) by D.I. Design & Development Consultants Limited, October 1982. By examining the retail profile for downtown Hamilton, one can better understand the potential role for the James Street North area.

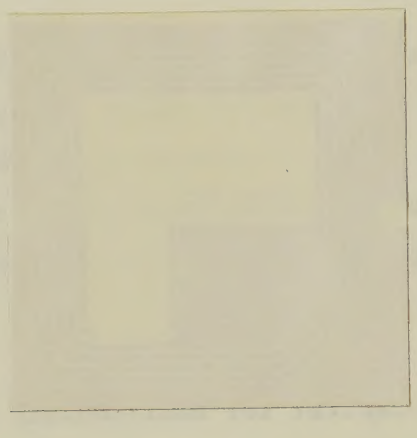
Downtown Hamilton is the centre of the city and the region. Over 10,000 people work in the area and there is approximately 2 million square feet of office space. Jackson Square has 1 million square feet of retail space while the remainder of the area bounded by Bay, King William, Wellington and Main provides an additional 1.2 million square feet in retail floor space.

Disposable income per capital for Hamiltonians is higher than the Canadian and Ontario average at $8,364.00 (1979). The population in Hamilton is 308,000.

Where in downtown Hamilton do people spend this disposable income? We can breakdown the downtown retailing area into shopping districts as done by the D.I. Design and Development Report. There is:

a) Jackson Square;
b) a cluster of stores/services in the Gore Park Area;
c) Terminal Towers Centre;
d) the King/Wellington International Village;
e) the area from Terminal Towers to Jarvis Street;
f) King William specialty area;
g) Hamilton Market;
h) James Street North.

It is from the numbers of shoppers, employees, office workers and business people that already use the downtown area that James Street North merchants can target new potential users. James Street North



is close to the largest downtown retail draw, Jackson Square. In the near future, the new Eaton's Centre will provide renewed interest in the area north of Jackson Square, immediately south of the James Street North district.

To complement these anchor developments and continue the successful approach used in the King William specialty area, James Street North can find potential users in providing more specialty retailing with possibly more restaurant emphasis. Specialty retailing suits the small business approach of James Street North and the attraction of unique and special items is complimentary to the Italian/Portuguese business community.

5. EXISTING FACILITIES/AMENITIES

With the exception of a small number of litter containers, street amenities on James Street North are severely lacking. There are street trees along both sides of the study area, however, many are intrusive to pedestrian flow and store signage. There is no overall consistency in street elements, resulting in visual clutter that detracts from the area's potential.

There is no open public green space, however, potential open space does exist in the development of the semi-public area in front of Christ Church Cathedral, the edges of the four private parking lots and on the C.N. property on both east and west sides of James Street North.

Public parking is available on the west side of James Street North in two Hamilton Parking Authority lots, one holds 166 cars (Vine Street) and the other 54 cars (Mulberry Street). There is street parking along James and seven small private parking lots.

5. a) A meeting between the Consultants and the Chief Warrant Officer was held at the Armouries subsequent to the first writing of the programme. At that meeting, the Consultants expressed the desire of many members of the public and of the Downtown Action Plan Co-ordinating Committee that the Armouries once again become more integrated into the James Street North Neighbourhood. It was emphasized to the Consultants however that the Armouries was an intensively used facility and a military "defence establishment". Orders for its operating procedures are handed down from the Base Technical Services Officer in Toronto, and locally the Armouries attempts to maintain a low profile on the street. A military museum is planned for the building but access to it would be limited to small pre-arranged tour groups.

6. OVERALL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The public input process has generated the main concerns to be addressed in the Overall Design Guidelines. Parking and traffic flow are issues of ACCESSIBILITY, security and lighting are issues of SECURITY, signage and heritage buildings are issues of IDENTITY, and cleanliness, street furniture, open public green space and street trees are issues of AMENITY.

The James Street North Streetscape Project will adhere to the following guidelines:

ACCESSIBILITY:

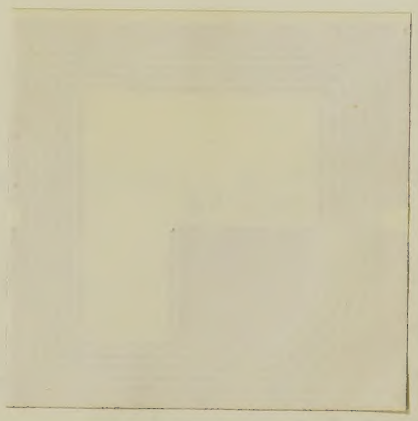
- provide convenient pedestrian links between shops, street and parking;
- clearly sign and enhance parking lot areas;
- study north-end parking lot potentials;
- provide off-site signage for access from surrounding areas;
- provide location maps for pedestrians;
- provide pedestrian surfacing across street crossing;
- provide standard street signs will be provided;
- provide wheelchair ramps at intersections.

SECURITY:

- provide suitable lighting on street;
- provide suitable lighting on pedestrian links;
- provide telephone booths along street;
- design all public and semi-public areas to be open to the street to allow passive surveillance.

IDENTITY:

- develop entry points at both ends of the project area;



- develop an ethnic motif utilizing distinctive patterns and colours that relate to the Portuguese/ Italian cultural heritage;
- develop a street sign that is characteristic to the ethnic identities of the area;
- use special street signs on James Street North, MacNab Street North, and Hughson Street North, starting at Vine and Wilson Streets to the C.N.R. line;
- provide pedestrian surfacing to reflect the ethnic heritage;
- identify each building site as to historic significance in adjacent sidewalk surface;
- provide outdoor space in co-operation with restaurant owners in character with the European cafe tradition;
- use lighting to accent historical and cultural architectural features without discouraging residential use of upper floors;
- name node areas (through public participation) and identify by signage at the site;
- accent entranceways to shops and businesses.

AMENITY:

- use majority of street furniture only in node areas;
- street furniture to include seating, litter containers, low walls, newspaper boxes, drinking fountains, bicycle racks and display boards, mail boxes and bollards;
- develop green areas in existing open space only;
- develop special features in node areas such as:
  - a famous hand prints display (performers appearing at Hamilton Place);
  - encourage an outdoor stationary display by the armed forces at the Armouries location;
  - develop a water feature for the Murray, C.N. block on the east side in conjunction with major open green space.

- use lighting for special effect at entry points, nodes and open public green space;
- locate litter containers in potential litter generation areas (e.g. variety stores, node areas);
- choose all materials for durability, soil resistance and ease of maintenance;
- concentrate tree planting at node areas, entry points and open public green space;
- develop a seasonal flower display programme;
- develop a winter tree light programme;
- bury hydro lines along the length of the street.